

IEPA Log No.: **C-0317-14**

CoE appl. #:

Public Notice Beginning Date: **December 9, 2016**

Public Notice Ending Date: **January 9, 2017**

Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
Amendments of 1972

Section 401 Water Quality Certification to Discharge into Waters of the State

Public Notice/Fact Sheet Issued By:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water
Permit Section
1021 North Grand Avenue East
Post Office Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276
217/782-3362

Name and Address of Discharger: Indian Grave Drainage District – P.O. Box 176, Ursa, IL 62376-0176

Discharge Location: Near Quincy in SW 1/4 of Section 16 of Township 1S, Range 9W of the 4th P.M. in Adams County.

Name of Receiving Water: Mississippi River

Project Description: Proposed levee improvement project consisting of stockpiling of dredged sediment from the Mississippi River.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has received an application for a Section 401 water quality certification to discharge into the waters of the state associated with a Section 404 permit application received by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Public Notice period will begin and end on the dates indicated in the heading of this Public Notice. The last day comments will be received will be on the Public Notice period ending date unless a commenter demonstrating the need for additional time requests an extension to this comment period and the request is granted by the IEPA. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the project to the IEPA at the above address. Commenters shall provide their names and addresses along with comments on the certification application. Commenters may include a request for public hearing. The certification and notice number(s) must appear on each comment page.

The attached Fact Sheet provides a description of the project and the antidegradation assessment.

The application, Public Notice/Fact Sheet, comments received, and other documents are available for inspection and may be copied at the IEPA at the address shown above between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday when scheduled by the interested person.

If written comments or requests indicate a significant degree of public interest in the certification application, the IEPA may, at its discretion, hold a public hearing. Public notice will be given 30 days before any public hearing. If a Section 401 water quality certification is issued, response to relevant comments will be provided at the time of the certification. For further information, please call Darren Gove at 217/782-3362.

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Two crude oil pipelines cross the Mississippi River in the area of the subject Drainage District. They cross the levee into the District and in order to protect the pipelines, it is necessary to increase the height of 1,840 linear feet of the levee at this location. To obtain the sand needed to raise the levee, dredging of the adjacent Mississippi River navigation channel will be performed. This is an area that is subject to repeated dredging and is known as Hogback Dredge Cut. Approximately 62,000 cubic yards of sand are necessary for the project. The sand will be hydraulically dredged and will be placed in a basin created out of a 4.2 acre plot of farmland on the land side of the levee. The basin will discharge settled dredge water into an unnamed tributary of the Mississippi River. The settling/sand storage facility will be issued a state operating permit to discharge overflow. No wetlands will be impacted by this project.

Information used in this review was obtained from the Applicant's joint application form and supplemental materials dated August 10, 2016.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

According to the draft 2016 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List, the unnamed tributary of the Mississippi River (no segment code) has not been assessed by Illinois EPA and is not listed as an impaired water body. The unnamed tributary is not listed as a biologically significant stream in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Publication *Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System* nor is it given an integrity rating in that document. The unnamed tributary at this location is not designated as an enhanced water pursuant to the dissolved oxygen water quality standard. The unnamed tributary drains farmland within the Indian Grave Drainage District. The water in the tributary is pumped through the levee into the Mississippi River. In lieu of a biological assessment of the unnamed tributary, the applicant submitted a report on a nearby drainage district's streams (Nutwood). The stream in the Indian Grave Drainage District would be similar in biological character to that in the Nutwood Drainage District. The fish population at Nutwood did not have any threatened or endangered species or any unusual or highly valued species assemblage. The land use in the Nutwood and Indian Grave Drainage Districts approaches 100% row crop agriculture.

Identification of Proposed Pollutant Load Increases or Potential Impacts on Uses.

The pollutant load increases that would occur from this project include some possible increases in total suspended solids. These increases, a normal and unavoidable result of hydraulic dredging, are not expected to impact designated uses. The return water from the dredging must meet water quality and effluent standards for solids and ammonia. Ammonia levels in the sand will be very low. Aquatic life use in the Mississippi River should return to the previous condition upon completion of the dredging. The bottom of the river will repopulate with macroinvertebrates soon after dredging completion.

The unnamed tributary receiving the overflow from the dredging settling basin/sand storage site may also see an increase in suspended solids. This loading will not be distinguishable from the existing loads in the water body.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

The increase in suspended solids will be local and temporary. Aquatic life disturbed by the dredging process will return to populate the river in much the same manner as were previously found before dredging occurred. This area of the river is prone to sand deposition, hence the need to have it periodically dredged. No adverse impact is expected in the unnamed tributary and the quality of water exiting the holding basin is expected to be similar to that already in the tributary.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The pipelines will be better protected after project completion resulting in improved safety. Obtaining the levee construction material from the Mississippi River in an area that must be periodically dredged for navigational reasons means that no new impacts will result. New construction jobs will be created by the project.

Assessments of Alternatives for Less Increase in Loading or Minimal Environmental Degradation.

Hydraulically dredging the Mississippi River to obtain construction material makes economic and environmental sense. The material will be placed in a holding basin exactly where it will be needed to raise the height of the levee. Obtaining the material elsewhere would necessitate trucking over relatively long distances. The Hogback Dredge Cut will not have to be dredged for navigation as soon as otherwise may have been necessary because of this project. Other alternatives for obtaining material to build up the levee would have a larger environmental footprint.

Summary Comments of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Regional Planning Commissions, Zoning Boards or Other Entities

An endangered species consultation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources was initiated using the Eco-CAT system on December 1, 2016. No endangered species were identified from the project area and consultation was immediately terminated. Additionally, the Rock Island District of the USACOE evaluated the project for potential impact on mussels. They concluded that given that the Mississippi River habitat at this location consists mostly of sand and has been repeatedly dredged in the past, that no mussel habitat exists in the project area.

Agency Conclusion.

This preliminary assessment was conducted pursuant to the Illinois Pollution Control Board regulation for Antidegradation found at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.105 (antidegradation standard)

and was based on the information available to the Agency at the time this assessment was written. We tentatively find that the proposed activity will result in the attainment of water quality standards; that all technically and economically reasonable measures to avoid or minimize the extent of the proposed increase in pollutant loading have been incorporated into the proposed activity; and that this activity will benefit the community at large by providing increased safety of two crude oil pipelines and creating new construction jobs. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.